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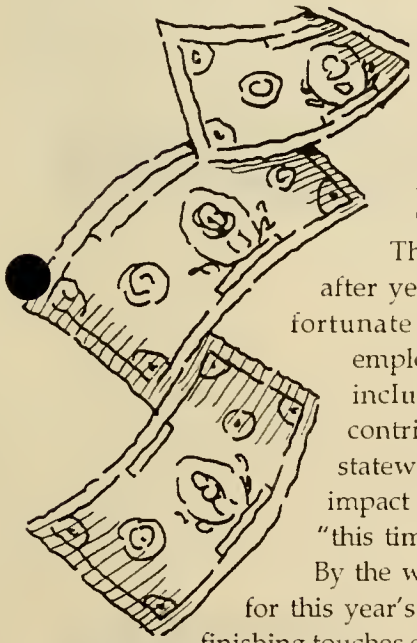
September 1998

A Time for Giving is Here

By Wayne Dillavou



Your opportunity to participate in one of the most worthwhile giving campaigns began on September 28 and runs through November 6, 1998. What is this opportunity? It's the FY99 **State Employees Charitable Giving Campaign!**

The employees of the State Fund have proven year after year that our capacity to share with those less fortunate is boundless. Again this year, State Fund employees will have a wide range of giving options including how you would like to specify your contribution. The end result is that over 399 local, statewide, and national nonprofit organizations that impact Montanans every day will be the beneficiary of "this time for giving."

By the way, did I forget to mention the fun and prizes for this year's time of giving? The committee is putting the finishing touches on a schedule of events that will make this year's campaign totally awesome! Keep an eye out for the schedule of events. It'll be fun for everyone!

Committee members

Agency Coordinator: Wayne Dillavou
Assistant Coordinator: Jill Olson
Claim: Sandra Rincon, Brad Cozzie, Gary Tuffli, and Joe Harrilla
MIS: Jonathan Linder
CSU: Andy Anderson
HR & Communications: Chuck Christiansen
Legal: Ben Jones
Accounting/Finance: Marvin Kraft
Underwriting: Jim McCormick

Underwriting Update

Producer of Record Letters:

To date, $17,246,671 worth of business is represented by producers who sent in producer of record letters.

Montana Building Industry Association:

Our Contractor's Association Program, also known as GRIP, has very good news. The group ended its first retro program on October 1, 1997, and had its final evaluation in July 1998. We are pleased to announce this program earned a 14% premium return.

Dividends:

State Fund's Board of Directors currently has the authority to declare dividends out of excess surplus to deserving policyholders, and we are in a strong financial condition. However, the amount of any excess surplus will depend on input from our consulting actuary's review of loss reserves and consideration for contingencies. We are optimistic about dividend potential at this time and may be making recommendations to our Board of Directors in the near future.

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

President's Message

Earlier this month, the State Fund's Board of Directors confirmed what all of us worked so hard for—that the Old Fund is adequately funded and that Montana's Old Fund Liability Tax can come to an early end.

This is truly a wonderful gift for all Montana businesses and workers. Ending the Old Fund Liability Tax will mean a savings to taxpayers of over $50 million each year.

In reality, getting to this day took the hard work and diligence of many people. Strong guidance from our Board of Directors, the commitment from Governor Racicot and many legislators on both sides of the aisle, and the support of Montana employers and their workers all helped to achieve a successful conclusion to the Old Fund issue.

As Governor Racicot and many others noted at the Board meeting, it also took the dedication and immense effort of the State Fund staff.

We should all be very proud of what we have accomplished together over the past few years. With a strong State Fund structure, and with continued work and vigilance, we should never see the need for a tax like the Old Fund Liability Tax placed on Montana citizens again.

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to **Cris McCoy,** Claim Supervisor and August's employee of the month. Although Cris manages her case load and unit, and provides technical support on BIS, she volunteered to help supervise the Murer project. She became familiar with the complicated case and provided guidance and input into the overall process. Cris provided supervision as well as completing her share of the work!

Cris rearranged her schedule to coincide with when the Murer team worked, including rotating weekends with Sam Heigh to provide support. She balanced her supervision and work in her own claim unit with supervising the Murer project. Her co-workers add, "She took the time to assist and answer questions no matter how busy she was, and her calm demeanor was always refreshing during the hectic times."

Kudos Kolumn

Wendy Lee recently assisted Representative Ed Grady, President of Grady Ranch Company, in a very professional and knowledgeable manner. He came in with a cancellation notice and Wendy explained why he received the notice and visited with him while waiting for a policy services representative to assist him in a recalculation.

Rich Goodwell with Yellowstone Food Service complimented the **Claim Department** on how well claims are managed. He explained he files for every single accident, and we help hold down costs by actively managing the claim. He is pleased to do business with the State Fund.

Debbie with Northside Welding commented on the great job **Becky Rabey** has done handling their policy over the last several years. Becky answers their questions and takes the extra step to help them in any way possible.

Mark Kuhr, a producer with Montana Insurance Center, spoke with **Kim Erickson** and later commented on how impressed he was. He explained, "whoever answered the phone was exceptional. It's sure nice to get people who care and try to help. It is service like this that goes a long way!"

Mr. Harrison with Harrison Ranch sent a letter to **Helen Osterloth** stating "it was indeed a pleasure to deal with a person who is competent, efficient, and congenial. Many other insurance and government employees can take lessons and follow your example."

Deanna Albert was recently complimented by a policyholder who stated, "it is not always easy to get assistance or questions answered from government departments. I appreciate your concern and time given to my queries!"

Employee of the Year

Lucinda Dixon, Claim Adjuster, is our very deserving Employee of the Year. Selected as the May Employee of the Month, Lucinda was liaison, negotiator, planner, organizer, leader, and trainer to all involved in the Murer case. Her co-workers commented that she worked extraordinary amounts of overtime to make sure the process ran smoothly. Lucinda assured there was open communication with the Claim Department, MIS, Accounting, and Customer Service. She put in all this extra effort on the Murer project and maintained her regular case load as well.

Lucinda comments on the award, "I believe this award was for the people, along with myself, who put in a considerable amount of time working on Murer. Everyone involved with the Murer project deserves recognition. I am very appreciative of the teamwork involved between claims and other departments. This cooperation made it possible to accomplish as much as we did."

Safety Makes Sense

State Fund Loss Control Services participated in the state's Safety Expo held on September 10. Loss Control Consultants handed out informational material and spoke with attendees about workplace safety.

A hit with those attending was the "office" our consultants set up with several safety hazards. A T-shirt was offered to the person who could identify the most hazards.

Governor Racicot's opening remarks were extremely complimentary to the State Fund's safety program. He commented on the State Fund's, as well as the Department of Administration's great strides in the area of office and ergonomic training.

Bonnie Rouse and Keri Routzahn, Loss Control Consultants, educate the public on the benefits of a safe workplace.

Training Calendar

Charting Your Career—October 8; 1-4:30pm

Employee Assistance Program, Employees—October 13; 3-3:30pm

Employee Assistance Program, Supervisors—October 13; 3:30-4pm

Intermediate Word—October 14, 15, 16; 9-12am

Essentials of Management, part 1—October 21, 28, 29; 8:30-4:30

Essentials of Management, part 2—November 4, 10, 17, 18; 8:30-4:30

Contemporary Writing Skills—October 22; 1-4pm and October 23; 9-12am

Change and Transition—October 27; 9-10:30am

Getting to Know Claim—October 28; 9-10am

Baby Block

Congratulations to Chantal and Andy Van Daele who recently welcomed their first baby—a girl! Lindsey Taylor was born on September 12, 1998.

New Employees

Kathy Gowen joined the State Fund Legal Department as an administrative assistant. She previously worked in Pocatello, Idaho as an administrative assistant for the county juvenile justice and probation department. Kathy has a BA in history from Montana State University. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, gardening, camping, and spending time with her family.

Barb Graziano is a new Underwriting Assistant. Barb has a BA in English Writing from Carroll College and previously worked at Blue Cross and Blue Shield as a Language and Grammar Specialist. She enjoys spending time with her family, as well as playing sports and other activities to stay fit.

State Fund's new Loss Control Manager is **Steve Halferty**. Steve's previous experience includes ten years at Kemper in various positions including multiline field consultant, staff consultant, and account coordinator. He has a BA in Safety Sciences from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and an ALCM.

Jo Heal was recently hired to provide administrative support to the Claim Department. Prior to coming to State Fund, Jo designed and maintained healthcare software. Her hobbies include horseshoes, pool, and hiking.

Tanya Kent joined the Underwriting Department as an Underwriting Technical Assistant. She worked at USF&G for several years and at Western States Insurance as a trainer for computer systems. While at USF&G, she worked her way up to a Personal Lines Underwriter and has devoted much of her time since then to the computer side of the insurance industry. Tanya enjoys hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, her horses, and spending time with her family.

Curt Larsen recently began work as the Senior Attorney in the Legal Department. His previous experience includes work on the legal staff at the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Principal Mutual Life Insurance Company, and Jackson, Murdo & Grant law firm. Curt has a BS in mathematics and a Juris Doctorate from University of Nebraska. His outside interests include volunteer work, hiking, backpacking, fishing, and reading.

Human Resources

Personnel changes as of September 28, 1998

NEW HIRES

Kathy Gowen—Legal
Curtis Larsen—Legal
Cindy Hawkins—Legal
Tom Kandt—Underwriting

DEPARTURES

Deborah Brebner—Legal
Rick Clark—Claim

The Underwriting Department celebrates Premium Audit meeting their business plan goal of 6,500 audits.

Editor: Chuck Christiansen
Managing Editor: Shannon Copps
Employee Reporters:
Kathy Rowsey Karen Wegner
Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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